

“I’M TOO GOOD TO BE BAD”: THE MODERATING ROLE OF  
HONESTY-HUMILITY IN AGGRESSIVE AND PROSOCIAL REACTIONS  
TO FIRST AND THIRD PARTY UNFAIRNESS

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011

Urbana, Illinois

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## **ABSTRACT**

In considering the deontic perspective of justice, research has called for the study of individual difference variables that explain differential reactions to unfair treatment. This is specifically due to the emerging literature on moral self-regulation as a determinant of workplace behaviors for some individuals, but not others (Rupp & Bell, 2010). In this paper, I consider how first and third-party injustice interacts with honesty-humility in predicting positive and negative behaviors. I manipulated first- (Study 1, N=552 participants) and third- (Study 2, N=606) party justice via laboratory experiments examining both counterproductive and retaliatory as well as citizenship and performance behavioral intentions. Support for the main effect of honesty-humility on revenge and reconciliation as well as the moderating role of honesty-humility on the relationship between first- and third-party unfairness and both prosocial and aggressive behaviors was found, controlling for the already established effects of gender, negative affect, conscientiousness, and agreeableness.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First, I would like to thank God for seeing me through to the end of this process. I thank my parents, sisters, and entire family for their unconditional and unwavering love, support, and belief in me. I thank my brothers and sisters in Christ for their prayers. I thank my friends and sorors for their kind and spirit lifting words. Last but certainly not least, I thank my advisors Deborah Rupp and Daniel Newman for their support and guidance through the writing of this thesis and my development as a scholar.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It has been well established in the I/O psychology and organizational behavior literature that organizational justice is an important workplace concern. There is strong evidence that organizational justice predicts an assortment of important workplace behaviors (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction, job performance, counterproductive work behaviors, turnover intentions, withdrawal; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). However, the prevailing theoretical perspectives that explain why justice matters to employees have largely specified the instrumental (e.g., equity theory; Adams, 1963) and relational (e.g., group value model; Tyler, 1989) functions served by justice (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001).

More contemporary perspectives have taken our understanding of workplace fairness a step further. As opposed to an emphasis on instrumental or relational concerns, the deontic perspective of justice focuses on the moral motivations that can lead individuals to care about fairness (Folger, 1998; 2001). Specifically, the deontic model proposes that there is a universal, evolutionary-based intolerance of injustice which has the potential to transcend the self (Folger, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2005). This intolerance leads to strong reactions against both experienced and observed injustice, such as revenge and retaliation (Tripp & Bies, 2010; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2007; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Conversely, newer findings by Rupp and Bell (2010) challenge the range of possible reactions to injustice. Their research suggests that when faced with injustice, individuals may not always respond negatively, or even at all. That is, individuals engaging in moral self-regulation

may choose not to seek punishment for perpetrators, if doing so might also be unfair. This possibility for multiple behavioral routes for restoring justice implies a need to consider what individual differences might influence reactions to injustice. This parallels the long-standing call in the I/O psychology and organizational behavior literatures for researchers to examine the interaction between situational factors and personality variables in order to better understand workplace behavior (Spector & Fox, 2005; Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Hough & Furnham, 2003).

Taking a first step in this direction, I propose *honesty-humility* (the extent to which one is sincere, fair, greed avoidant and modest in interactions with others; Lee & Ashton, 2004) as a potential personality variable with which to explain differential reactions to experienced unfairness. This construct has gained momentum in the personality psychology literature, but has yet to be applied to the study of organizational justice. The purpose of this paper is to show how considering honesty-humility can inform our understanding of deontic justice and both aggressive and prosocial reactions to unfairness. First, I will review relevant research from the areas of organizational justice and honesty-humility. Then I will present two studies designed to examine the moderating role of honesty-humility on the relationship between unfairness and its subsequent reactions.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 The Deontic Model

As argued by Folger and Cropanzano (2001), employees' reactions to injustice are not always instrumentally motivated (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Rather, according to the deontic perspective of justice, fairness is pitched as an evolutionarily-based, universal norm of human conduct (Folger & Skarlicki, 2008). The word deontic comes from the Greek root word *deon*, which means a binding duty or obligation. It is based on the idea that there are ethical principles that inform us of how we should treat others. Most individuals adhere to these morally authoritative rules as opposed to thinking and acting as if those rules are not applicable to them (Folger et al., 2005). The deontic model highlights the fact that people express moral outrage when others disregard the moral norms that govern society (Folger & Skarlicki, 2005). Unfair treatment is thought to arouse this moral outrage as there is a common belief that individuals should be treated with dignity and respect (Folger et al., 2005).

According to Folger et al., the violation of moral social norms leads to quick and automatic feelings of being exploited. The response to injustice can also be irrational and emotional; the specific emotion is called deontic anger. As there is an intrinsic desire for justice among people (cf., Cropanzano & Rupp, 2002), unfair treatment leads to a strong motivation to punish transgressors. As long as blame for the injustice can be assigned to a particular entity (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; 2001), revenge and retaliation are desired reactions. It is important to note that the deontic reaction to injustice is not self-interested. Deontic anger occurs because of a violation of a moral social norm, not necessarily because of a hindrance to one's own personal goals (Folger et al., 2005).

This emotional response can be imbued not only by those who experience injustice themselves, but also “among strangers engaged in one-shot encounters, as well as fairness responses displayed by neutral third-party spectators who have no direct stake in a given instance of injustice” (Folger, 2001, p. 5). Within the workplace, third-parties can include coworkers who witness the unfair treatment of others. Skarlicki and Kulik (2005) define third-parties as individuals who make judgments of organizational justice based on an indirect or vicarious experience, as opposed to a direct one. It has been suggested that third-parties can have similar, although less intense responses to the injustice enacted on the first-party victim (Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998), as long as they agree that an injustice has actually occurred (Skarlicki, Ellard, & Kelln, 1998).

Empirical research that supports the deontic perspective has been based on the desire of third-parties to intervene on behalf of a wronged other. Initially, Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler (1985) demonstrated that individuals are willing to sacrifice their own resources in order to punish individuals who have been known to wrong others. Turillo et al. (2002) extended these findings by showing that even when individuals do not know the victim and will not have to interact with the victim or wrongdoer in the future, they will still self-sacrifice if it is the only way to punish the wrongdoer. Some individual difference moderators to the relationship between experiences of injustice and deontic responses have been examined as well. Rupp (2003) and Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, and Felps (2009) demonstrated that higher levels of moral maturity and moral identity, respectively, heightened deontic responses to wrongdoers (see also Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010).



## **2.2 Reactions to Injustice: The Vigilante Model of Justice**

Tripp et al. (2007) outline a detailed set of steps involving how individuals react to unfairness. According to their “Vigilante Model of Justice,” if an offense is strong enough and blame can be assigned to an individual or entity, then there is motivation to enact revenge. However, situational and personality factors will moderate what the actual coping behavior is (Tripp et al., 2007). Unfair treatment can certainly be categorized as an offense. Tripp et al. (2007) specifically define offenses as goal obstruction, status and power derogation, and/or rule violation; status and power derogation are encompassed by interactional justice, while rule violation is encompassed by procedural justice. Once an offense has been experienced by a victim, the more s/he blames the offender, the greater the motivation for revenge (Tripp et al., 2007). However, there is a distinct difference between revenge motives and revenge behaviors (Jones, 2010). A high motivation for revenge does not mean that revenge will be enacted; there are both situational and personality factors that will determine how a victim will respond. The situational factors include the victim’s power or rank in the organization as well as whether the organization’s procedural justice climate is low or high (Aquino et al., 2001; 2006). The personality traits that have been proposed to have an effect on whether a victim will act on their motivation for revenge include trait anger, attitudes towards revenge, low self-control, attribution style, and negative affectivity (Douglas & Martinko, 2001; Aquino et al., 2001; Skarlicki, et al., 1999).

After an offense has occurred, blame has been placed, and a desire to enact revenge is present, what are the different reactions, or coping responses that are possible? A plethora of constructs have emerged from the organizational psychology literature that tap what has been termed the “dark side” of organizational behavior (Griffin & O’Leary-Kelly, 2004). Within this

domain reside variables such as revenge (Tripp & Bies, 1997), retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), counterproductive work behavior (Spector & Fox, 2002), workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), antisocial employee behavior (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997), and workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). In their model, Tripp et al. (2007) use the Aquino et al. (2001, p. 53) definition of revenge: “an action in response to some perceived harm or wrongdoing by another party that is intended to inflict damage, injury, discomfort, or punishment on the party judged responsible.” Some of the included examples of revenge were “withholding effort or work,” “intentionally turning in poor work performance,” “deliberately not supporting the offender when support is needed,” and “bad-mouthing the offender” (Tripp et al., 2007, p. 20). Viewed within this context, the above specified “dark side” behaviors could be thought of as forms of revenge if executed in response to an offense where a specific offender can be blamed (for a theoretical rationale for the inclusion of all these behaviors under the umbrella of workplace aggression, see Bies & Tripp, 2005). Indeed, unfairness has been found to predict many negative workplace behaviors, including theft, aggression, counterproductive work behaviors, and sabotage (Colquitt, et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002).

### **2.3 Moral Self-Regulation in Responses to Unfairness**

Whereas research has clearly evidenced this justice-retaliatory mechanism (e.g., Tripp et al., 2007; Aquino et al., 2006; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), recent research by Rupp and Bell (2010) has argued that revenge, retaliation, and punishment tendencies are not necessarily the only responses to result from such deontic anger. Indeed, some victims will adhere to the belief that revenge is always an immoral decision (Tripp & Bies, 2010; Tripp & Bies, 1997). Therefore,

Rupp and Bell (2010) argue for a second potential response, characterized by *inaction* resulting from a moral self-regulation process that allows people to control their reactions to injustice.

Moral self-regulation has been defined as comparing one's actions to internalized moral standards and working to evade violation of those standards (Bandura, 1986; 1991). There are both *inhibitory* processes that prevent the individual from engaging in unethical behavior, and *proactive* processes that motivate the individual to engage in ethical behavior. Although Bandura's model focuses on moral behavior that is provoked by the avoidance of self-recrimination, moral self-regulation may also have both preventive and promotional bases (Higgins, 1997). Specifically, Higgins discusses a *prevention* or avoidance focus that emphasizes what one 'ought' to do, for fear of reprisal, and a *promotion* or approach focus that emphasizes 'ideal' aspirations and accomplishments (Higgins, 1998).

Similar to the resource allocation designs of Kahneman et al., (1986) and Turillo et al. (2002), Rupp and Bell (2010) allowed participants the opportunity to punish an offender who had been known to act unfairly in the past. However, they instructed the participants to verbalize their decision making process and recorded their responses. In applying moral self-regulation to this context, one could create a prevention frame that would avoid punishing an offender because doing so would be unfair and unjust, or one could create a promotion frame that would avoid punishing an offender because it is fair, honest, or the right thing to do (Rupp & Bell, 2010). Regardless of the frame that could potentially be enacted, it was expected that among the participants who chose not to punish the offender, a moral self-regulation process would be vocalized during their decision-making time. The results of this study supported this prediction.

Overall, Rupp and Bell (2010) demonstrated that while people may engage in retaliation to punish an offender who has acted unfairly, people may also withhold punishment if they are

concerned that their reaction might also be constituted as unfair. In other words, some people may feel that the act of revenge is unfair in and of itself, and that two wrongs will not rectify the situation. Some victims of injustice, therefore, evaluate the fairness of their own reactions relative to the fair and unfair situations encountered at work. The question becomes, then, *who might be more likely to engage in moral self-regulation?* As noted above, Tripp et al.'s (2007) vigilante model of justice indicates that while unfairness will bring about a desire for revenge, personality can moderate how a person chooses to react. Which personality trait allows us to differentiate between those who retaliate in the face of injustice, and those who instead engage in moral self-regulation? I feel the answer lies within the trait of honest-humility. Honest-humility should play a role in the decision to react to both experienced and witnessed injustice.

## **2.4 Honesty-Humility**

Honesty-humility is a personality factor that falls within Lee and Ashton's (2004) HEXACO model of personality. HEXACO is an acronym for honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. Whereas I/O psychologists are most familiar with the "big five" model of personality (e.g., Goldberg, 1990) as the prevailing structure of human personality, more recent research within personality psychology has been critical of this paradigm. Much of the debate stems from the argument that some important facets remain unaccounted for, most importantly facets related to morality, honesty, and ethicality (Hough & Furnham, 2003). As such, Ashton, Lee, and Son (2000) have presented honesty-humility as a possible sixth factor of personality, and considerable research has supported its existence.

The HEXACO model emerged via a lexical approach (Galton, 1884), which posits that personality attributes reside in the natural language. This process involves factor analyzing

commonly used adjectives within a language and determining which structure best fits responses to a variety of words. Lexical research has shown evidence for honesty-humility across a number of languages, including Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Polish, English (American and Australian), Croatian, Greek, Filipino, and Turkish (Wasti, Lee, Ashton, & Somer, 2008; Lee & Ashton, 2008; Ashton, Lee, deVries, et al., 2006; Lee, Ashton, & deVries, 2005; Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2004; Ashton, Lee, Perugini et al., 2004). The HEXACO model integrates honesty-humility with the other big five personality factors (Lee & Ashton, 2004). The major difference between the big five model and the HEXACO model, aside from the addition of the honesty-humility factor, is how agreeableness and neuroticism emerge in the structure. Specifically, the facets that pertain to anger-versus-calm transfer from neuroticism to a new variation of low agreeableness, and the facets related to sensitivity-versus-toughness transfer from agreeableness to a new form of neuroticism, now termed emotionality (Ashton & Lee, 2005). Agreeableness only differs from its five factor model counterpart in that it takes on an anger component, which makes one of the characteristics of someone high on the trait slow to react angrily in situations.

Honesty-humility can be defined as the tendency to be genuine and sincere in interpersonal relations, to be fair and avoid fraud and corruption, to be greed avoidant and uninterested in possessing wealth and high social status, and to be modest and unassuming (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Honesty-humility has been interpreted as a tendency to be fair and genuine when interacting with others without enacting retaliation, even when exploited, and is consistent with the reciprocity related construct of fairness-versus-exploitation (Ashton & Lee, 2001; Ashton & Lee, 2008a). Evidence has shown that honesty-humility is highly negatively correlated with other personality traits that suggest a willingness to cheat, deceive, or manipulate others for

personal gain, such as immorality, social adroitness, and machiavellianism (Ashton & Lee, 2001). In addition, honesty-humility is theorized to be associated with decreased opportunities for personal gain that would result from the manipulation of others coupled with decreased risk of retaliation from others (Ashton & Lee, 2008a).

Research has already demonstrated a relationship between honesty-humility and aggressive behaviors. Lee, Ashton, and Shin (2005) examined how honesty-humility relates to antisocial behaviors toward individuals and antisocial behavior toward organizations. Using data from a Korean sample, these researchers showed how the addition of honesty-humility to the Big Five in predicting both forms of antisocial behaviors significantly increased the explained variance in antisocial behaviors towards the individual ( $\Delta R^2 = .030$ ) and the organization ( $\Delta R^2 = .071$ ). In addition, with Dutch, Canadian, and Australian samples, Lee, Ashton, and de Vries (2005) found that honesty-humility was a stronger predictor of workplace deviancy ( $\beta = -.44$ ) than any of the single big five facets. Further, Lee, Gizzarone, and Ashton (2003) found that honesty-humility had a stronger relationship with the tendency to sexually harass than any of the other Big Five factors. Taken as a whole, this research demonstrates a relationship between honesty-humility and aggressive behaviors. In particular, individuals high in this construct have been found to be less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors (Marcus, Lee, & Ashton, 2007), workplace deviance (Lee, Ashton, & de Vries, 2005), and unethical business decisions (Ashton & Lee, 2008b).

Recent research has also established a relationship between honesty-humility and prosocial traits and behaviors. Specifically, Shepard and Belicki (2008) found that honesty-humility significantly predicted trait forgiveness ( $\beta = .19$ )<sup>1</sup>. Honesty-humility has also been found to positively predict benevolence ( $\beta = .22$ ) and negatively predict revenge ( $\beta = -.15$ ;

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, agreeableness significantly predicted trait forgiveness as well ( $\beta = .73$ ; Shepard & Belicki, 2008).

Carmody & Gordon, 2011). In addition, honesty-humility has been found to be a strong predictor of job performance, even when statistically controlling for conscientiousness ( $\beta = .25$ ; Johnson, Rowatt, & Petrini, 2011). Overall, a significant amount of research has been conducted to demonstrate that honesty-humility predicts both prosocial and aggressive behaviors. However, to date, no study has tested how honesty-humility might interact with experienced unfairness in predicting such outcomes.

## **2.5 The Current Studies**

Figure 1 illustrates the role that I expect honesty-humility to play in the relationship between unfairness and both prosocial and aggressive behaviors. First, I believe that while there is evidence supporting the negative relationship between unfairness and both revenge and other aggressive behaviors (e.g., Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), I believe that individual differences in honesty-humility will affect this relationship. More specifically, I expect that the relationship between both first- and third-party unfairness and aggressive behaviors will be weaker among those who are higher in honesty-humility as opposed to those who are lower in honesty-humility. This is because those with higher levels of honesty-humility may be more likely to engage in moral self-regulation that will allow them to avoid engaging in aggressive behaviors in response to unfairness. This is consistent with the theory behind the honesty-humility trait, which says that those with high levels of honesty-humility are fair and genuine when interacting with others *without enacting retaliation*, even towards those who exploit them (Ashton & Lee, 2008; Ashton & Lee, 2001). In addition, the established negative relationship between honesty-humility and aggressive behaviors (e.g., Ashton & Lee, 2008; Marcus, et al., 2007) suggests that despite situational unfairness being present, those with high levels of honesty-humility will restrain themselves from enacting revenge.

Next, I am interested in the boundary conditions that determine whether an individual will not only withhold revenge, but also act prosocially in the face of injustice. Tripp et al.'s (2007) vigilante model of justice provides room for coping responses that do not result in harm being inflicted on the offender. In their model, forgiveness is defined as "the internal act of relinquishing anger and resentment toward the offender" (Tripp et al., 2007, p. 21). It involves making the decision to rid oneself of the negative emotions that arise as a result of the offense. Beyond forgiveness is reconciliation, which is the actual behavior of offering goodwill towards the offender in order to reestablish the broken relationship (McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & High, 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). Within the workplace, offering goodwill to an organizational offender (e.g., a supervisor or coworker) could be conceptualized as engaging in high performance behaviors as well as prosocial and organizational citizenship behaviors. However, according to Tripp et al.'s (2007) model, a strong motivation for revenge will lead to a victim being less likely to forgive and reconcile with the offender.

Tripp et al. (2007) posit that if revenge is forgone, forgiveness and reconciliation can only occur when the offender offers an apology to the victim and/or the offender is punished by a superior. However, given the positive relationship between honesty-humility and trait forgiveness as well as the negative relationship between honesty-humility and revenge, it is possible that those who possess high levels of honesty-humility may engage in these positive behaviors because they think it is the right thing to do. As some victims believe that revenge is wrong at all times (Tripp & Bies, 2010; Tripp & Bies, 1997), they may choose to get past the unfair treatment in their own way (e.g., forgiving the offender, reconciling with the offender, and/or engaging in high performance and organizational citizenship behavior). This reflects



belief in nonviolent behavior as a means to achieve one's goal of eventual fair treatment at work (Mayton, 2009).

In addition, the effects of demographic and individual difference variables such as gender (e.g., Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993), negative affectivity (e.g., Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999), conscientiousness and agreeableness (Hough & Furnham, 2003) have been found to have an effect on counterproductive and retaliatory behaviors. For example, Skarlicki et al. (1999) found that both negative affectivity and agreeableness moderated the relationship between justice and workplace retaliation. Specifically, when negative affectivity was high, injustice was associated with organizational retaliatory behaviors. When agreeableness was low, injustice led to organizational retaliatory behaviors. Therefore, as shown in the Figure 1, I will control for the effects of these variables in order to demonstrate the incremental role that honesty-humility plays in these relationships beyond these established variables.

I test this model over the course of two experimental studies: Study 1 focuses on first-party unfairness, while Study 2 investigates third-party unfairness. While overall I am proposing moderation hypotheses which focus on the interaction term of unfairness (present, not present) x honesty-humility (high, low), due to the nature of some of the dependent variables (e.g., revenge, forgiveness, and reconciliation), it is necessary to investigate instead the main effect of honesty-humility under conditions of unfairness. This is because a person must specifically react to an undesirable situation in order to decide whether he or she will want to enact revenge, forgiveness, or reconciliation (K. Aquino, personal communication, October 18, 2008). However, the other dependent variables that make up the aggressive and prosocial behavioral domain can be investigated in instances of both fair and unfair treatment. Therefore, I will

propose both main effect and interaction hypotheses about the role of honesty-humility in the relationship between unfairness and both aggressive and prosocial behaviors.

*Hypothesis 1: Under circumstances of experienced (first-party) unfairness (and controlling for the effects of gender, negative affectivity, conscientiousness, and agreeableness), honesty-humility will (a) negatively predict revenge, (b) positively predict reconciliation, and (c) positively predict forgiveness.*

Next, I hypothesize that those who are high in honesty-humility will engage in less aggressive behaviors when faced with injustice themselves, compared to those who are low in honesty-humility. I think that honesty-humility will have an opposite effect regarding organizational citizenship behaviors and performance, where those high in honesty-humility will engage in more of these behaviors than those who are low in honesty-humility<sup>2</sup>.

*Hypothesis 2: Honesty-humility will moderate the effect of experienced (first-party) unfairness on (a) counterproductive work behavior and organizational retaliatory behavior, (b) performance, and (c) organizational citizenship behavior, such that the positive effects on negative outcomes and the negative effects on positive outcomes will be weaker for those high in honesty-humility (controlling for the effects of gender, negative affectivity, conscientiousness, and agreeableness).*

Lastly, I hypothesize that this effect will not only occur when individuals are faced with injustice themselves, but also when they are third-party witnesses to unfairness.

*Hypothesis 3: Honesty-humility will moderate the effect of witnessed (third-party) unfairness on (a) counterproductive work behavior and organizational retaliatory behavior, (b) performance, and (c) organizational citizenship behavior, such that the positive effects on negative outcomes and the negative effects on positive outcomes will be weaker for those high in honesty-humility (controlling for the effects of gender, negative affectivity, conscientiousness, and agreeableness).*

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<sup>2</sup> As it has been demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior has content in common with counterproductive work behavior (Spector, Bauer, & Fox, 2010), the inclusion of organizational citizenship behavior will enhance the study. More specifically, antithetical items (i.e., counterproductive work behavior items present on organizational citizenship behavior measures that are reversed scored, and/or organizational citizenship behavior items present on counterproductive work behavior measures that are reversed scored) leads to similar items being present on both counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior measures (Dalal, 2005).

## CHAPTER 3

### STUDY 1

#### 3.1 Method

**Participants and procedure.** Four hundred and ninety five undergraduate students from a large Midwestern U.S. university and 67 participants from a Canadian university participated in this study, for a total of 562 participants. There were approximately equal numbers of men ( $N = 276$ ) and women ( $N = 278$ ). Eight participants did not report their genders. The sample was 55.7% White/Caucasian, 21.7% Asian, 8.5% Black/African-American, 6.2% Latino/a, 4.6% Multiracial, 3.2% not specified/other. The mean age was 19.27 years ( $SD = 1.29$  years), 91.6% of the participants were either currently or had previously been employed, and 49.7% indicated that they had previously been treated unfairly at work. Participants received course credit for their participation.

Participants first completed the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004) and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The order of these two measures was counterbalanced. Next, the participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions [unfair ( $N=176$ ), fair ( $N=199$ ), and control ( $N=187$ )], and were presented a scenario to read which was representative of each assigned condition. After reading the scenario, participants completed measures of the dependent variables, namely, intentions to engage in counterproductive work behavior (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), organizational retaliatory behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), organizational citizenship behavior (Williams & Anderson, 1991), and performance (Williams and Anderson, 1991). Intentions to enact revenge, reconciliation, and forgiveness (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006) were assessed for individuals in the unfair condition. The dependent variable scales were also

counterbalanced. A manipulation check and demographic questionnaires were included as well. In order to motivate the participants to complete the measures accurately, I informed them that they would receive personality feedback at the end of the study, and did in fact make it available to them.

**Experimental manipulation of unfairness.** Vignettes in which the participants were the main characters were used to induce fairness and unfairness. Vignettes have been used to manipulate justice in previous research (e.g., Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010; Spencer & Rupp, 2009; Scott & Colquitt, 2007; Rupp & Spencer, 2006), and when carefully constructed, can be useful in communicating realistic workplace information (Woehr & Lance, 1991). The scenario asked each participant to imagine that s/he was a restaurant server. This type of job is one that is familiar to student participants (either in a customer or server capacity) and was thus a situation that could be easily envisioned. Consistent with the recommendations and findings of Ambrose and Schminke (2009), Holtz and Harold (2009), and Jones and Martens (2009), I treated justice as a global overall construct with a specified source/accountable party (i.e., the supervisor).

In both the fair and unfair conditions, details are given about the participants' work performance as well as his/her fair or unfair treatment from the supervisor. For example, in the fair condition, a sentence reads: *"When the manager makes decisions that affect you, your opinion and input are requested and you feel like you have a say in the decision process."* However, in the unfair condition, the same sentence reads: *"When the manager makes decisions that affect you, your opinion and input are not requested and you feel that you do not have any say in the decision process."* In the control condition, no information about treatment from the supervisor is given. Because the findings of Skarlicki and Folger (1997) indicated that the three-way interaction between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice led to the strongest

prediction of organizational retaliatory behaviors, I included all types of in/justice (i.e., distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational) in order to create the most effective injustice manipulation. This is also consistent with the deontic perspective, which rather than focusing on the difference between situational elements perceived to be unfair (e.g., outcomes, procedures), focuses on commonalities in response patterns across varying conditions (e.g., anger, moral outrage, etc.; Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

***Manipulation checks.*** Four questions based on Colquitt's (2001) organizational justice scale were created to determine whether the scenario effectively described the treatment it was designed to bestow. Participants were asked "If you were in this situation, would you feel that," followed by the four items: "the rewards given to you by your supervisor reflect what you deserve," "the procedures by which your supervisor treats you are fair," "your supervisor interacts with you in a fair manner," and "your supervisor explains things to you in a fair way?" Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *not at all likely* (1) to *extremely likely* (5). Internal consistency reliability for the manipulation check was  $\alpha = .96$ . A one-way ANOVA [ $F(2, 554)=580.55, p<.01$ ] showed that participants in the unfair condition ( $M_{unfair}= 1.79$ ) had lower average responses to the manipulation check questions than those in the fair ( $M_{fair}= 4.20$ ) and control ( $M_{control}= 3.77$ ) conditions.

### **Measures.**

***Honesty-humility and other personality measures.*** Honesty-humility, conscientiousness, and agreeableness were assessed using the short form of the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004). As opposed to using all of the HEXACO factors, conscientiousness and agreeableness were measured as control variables because of the established effect of these variables on our dependent variables of interest (Hough & Furhman, 2003; Skarlicki et al.,

1999). For honesty-humility, sixteen items were used that assessed (four items for each facet): sincerity (e.g., “If I want something from a person I dislike, I will act very nicely toward that person in order to get it.”), fairness (e.g., “I’d be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.”), greed avoidance (e.g., “Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.”), and modesty (e.g., “I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.”). For conscientiousness, sixteen items were used that assessed: organization (e.g., “I clean my office and home quite frequently.”), diligence (e.g., “When working, I often set ambitious goals for myself.”), perfectionism (e.g., “I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.”), and prudence (e.g., “I don’t allow my impulses to govern my behavior.”). For agreeableness, sixteen items were used that assessed (four items each): forgiveness (e.g., “I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.”), gentleness (e.g., “I tend to be lenient in judging other people.”), flexibility (e.g., “I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.”), and patience (e.g., “Most people tend to get angry quicker than I do.”). Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Internal consistency reliability for the honesty-humility, conscientiousness, and agreeableness measures were  $\alpha = .83$ ,  $\alpha = .84$ , and  $\alpha = .85$ , respectively.

**Negative affectivity.** I assessed negative affectivity using the ten items from the PANAS scale (Watson et al., 1988). These ten items consisted of adjectives that described negative mood states (e.g., “distressed”, “nervous”, “hostile”), with participants indicating how often they generally felt those mood states. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Internal consistency reliability for this measure was  $\alpha = .77$ .

***Dependent measures.*** All of the dependent measures were prefaced with a statement that read “If you were in this situation, how likely would you be to” with the items listed after. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *not at all likely* (1) to *extremely likely* (5).

***Likelihood to enact revenge, reconciliation, and forgiveness.*** Revenge, reconciliation, and forgiveness intentions were measured with an adapted version of Aquino et al.’s (2006) measure. This measure assesses the extent to which participants would be likely to act out revenge (e.g., “try to hurt them”), reconcile with (e.g., “try to make amends”), and/or forgive (e.g., “let go of your hurt and pain”) someone who has offended them. Because the items reference undesirable treatment, this measure was only given to those in the unfair condition. The items would have not been applicable for individuals in the other conditions because they would not make sense to these subjects. Internal consistency reliability for this measure was  $\alpha = .84$  for revenge (4 items),  $\alpha = .80$  for reconciliation (3 items), and  $\alpha = .87$  for forgiveness (4 items).

***Likelihood to engage in counterproductive work behaviors.*** Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) intentions were assessed with a modified version of Bennett and Robinson’s (2000) workplace deviance scale. This measure assessed the extent to which the participants would be likely to engage in negative behaviors in the workplace (e.g., “take property from work without permission”, “make fun of someone at work”) if they were actually in the fairness scenario. Internal consistency reliability for this measure was  $\alpha = .92$  (13 items).

***Likelihood to engage in organizational retaliatory behaviors.*** Organizational retaliatory behavior (ORB) intentions were assessed with a modified version of Skarlicki and Folger’s (1997) organizational retaliatory behavior scale. This measure also assesses negative behaviors in the workplace, but was developed to be used directly in response to organizational injustice

(e.g., as indicated in the unfairness scenario). Items included “call in sick when not ill,” and “gossip about your boss.” Internal consistency reliability for this measure was  $\alpha = .94$  (17 items).

*Likelihood to engage in organizational citizenship and performance behaviors.*

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and performance intentions were assessed with a modified version of Williams and Anderson’s (1991) scale. This measure asks the participants to indicate whether they would engage in both in-role behaviors (e.g., “fulfill responsibilities specified in job requirements”) and extra-role behaviors (e.g., “assist the supervisor with his/her work when not asked”). Internal consistency reliability for the performance measure was  $\alpha = .79$  (7 items), and for the OCB measure was  $\alpha = .78$  (6 items).

**Other measures.** In addition, I also obtained demographic information from the participants including gender, age, ethnicity, country of citizenship, level of education, whether they currently worked or had a job in the past, and whether they had been treated unfairly at work before.

### **3.2 Results**

Scale means, standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and inter-correlations among Study 1 variables are provided in Table 1. Table 2 depicts cell means for high and low honesty-humility individuals assigned to each condition, for each dependent variable. For the hierarchical regression analyses, honesty-humility was entered as a continuous variable. In order to plot the interactions and create Table 2, high and low honesty-humility groups were formed by placing those one standard deviation or more above the mean into the high group and those one standard deviation or below into the low group. The values on the interaction graphs were calculated using the regression equations.



Our first set of hypotheses involved only the participants who were in the unfairness condition, as they were the only participants who (due to their unfair treatment) could desire to enact revenge, reconciliation, or forgiveness. I used hierarchical regression analyses in order to enter the control variables at the first step (gender, negative affect, conscientiousness, and agreeableness). I then entered honesty-humility in order to determine its main effect on each of the three Hypothesis 1 dependent variables (revenge, reconciliation, and forgiveness; see Table 3). As expected, our results showed that honesty-humility was a significant predictor of revenge ( $\beta = -.25, p < .05$ ) and reconciliation ( $\beta = .24, p < .05$ ), but not forgiveness ( $\beta = .20, ns$ ). In addition, the change in  $R^2$  was significant when honesty-humility was added to the regression equation for both revenge ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ) and reconciliation ( $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ), but not for forgiveness. Honesty-humility's effect on reconciliation was not as strong as the effect of agreeableness ( $\beta = .66, p < .001$ ), but was still significant. However, honesty-humility was not a significant predictor of forgiveness beyond agreeableness ( $\beta = .69, p < .001$ ). Thus, hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported, but Hypothesis 1c was not.

In order to test our second set of hypotheses, I used hierarchical regression analyses in order to examine whether there was a significant interaction between unfairness and honesty-humility on each dependent variable. I mean-centered all continuous control, predictor, and moderator variables entered at all steps of each equation and before computing the product terms for the moderator analyses, as recommended by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). For all analyses, the control variables (gender, negative affectivity, conscientiousness, and agreeableness) were entered at the first step, followed by honesty-humility and unfairness at step two. The interaction between honesty-humility and unfairness was entered at step three.

Hypothesis 2a predicted weaker positive effects of unfairness on counterproductive work behavior and organizational retaliatory behaviors when honesty-humility is high. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the honesty-humility by unfairness condition interaction is significant for both counterproductive work behavior ( $\beta = -.35, p < .001$ ), and organizational retaliatory behavior ( $\beta = -.37, p < .001$ ). The pattern of this interaction is shown in Figures 2 and 3, where those high in honesty-humility engage in less CWB and ORB whether they are treated unfairly or fairly. Simple slopes tests of the regression lines shown in Figures 2 and 3 reveal that the slope for individuals low in honesty-humility is significant with CWB as the dependent variable,  $t(64) = 2.55, p < .05$ , and with ORB as the dependent variable,  $t(55) = 3.23, p < .05$ . However, the slopes for individuals high in honesty-humility were not significant with CWB or ORB as the dependent variables. The change in  $R^2$  between steps 2 and 3 was significantly different for CWB ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .01$ ), and the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size is .03. The change in  $R^2$  between steps 2 and 3 was significantly different for ORB ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .001$ ), and the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size is .04. These results confirm the moderating effect of honesty-humility on the relationship between unfairness and aggressive behaviors. Therefore Hypothesis 2a was supported.

Hypothesis 2c predicted weaker negative effects of unfairness on performance when honesty-humility was high (vs. low). This result was not confirmed. However, the interaction between unfairness and honesty-humility in predicting OCB was significant ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ), therefore supporting Hypothesis 2d (see Table 6). The pattern of this interaction is shown in Figure 4, where overall those who are high in honesty-humility engage in more OCB whether they are treated unfairly or not. In addition, the slopes of both the low honesty-humility regression line,  $t(64) = -2.95, p < .05$ , and the high honesty-humility regression line,  $t(55) = -2.12, p < .05$ , were significantly different from zero. The change in  $R^2$  between steps 2 and 3 was

significantly different for OCB ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .05$ ), and the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size is .01. These results confirm the slight moderating effect of honesty-humility on the relationship between unfairness and prosocial behaviors. Therefore, Hypothesis 2d was confirmed, but not Hypothesis 2c.

### **3.3 Discussion**

Taken together, the results show that honesty-humility predicts revenge and reconciliation, and moderates the relationship between first-party justice and both positive and negative organizational behaviors. This means that individuals who have high levels of honesty-humility are less likely to enact revenge when treated unfairly, and more likely to attempt reconciliation even when treated unfairly. However, following an instance of unfair treatment, high agreeableness led to a stronger likelihood to attempt forgiveness. This makes sense, as forgiveness is a facet of agreeableness in the HEXACO model of personality (Lee & Ashton, 2004).

Overall, those high in honesty-humility engaged in less CWB and ORB than those low in honesty-humility. Those who are high in honesty-humility were found to engage in the same amount of aggressive behaviors, whether they were treated fairly or not. On the other hand, those who are low in honesty-humility engaged in more aggressive behaviors when treated unfairly compared to those treated fairly. Those high in honesty-humility also engaged in more OCB than those low in honesty-humility. However, among both high and low honesty-humility groups, more OCB intentions were reported in the fair condition compared to the unfair condition.

We now shift our focus to third-party justice in order to more fully understand how honesty-humility pertains to the deontic perspective of justice.

## CHAPTER 4

### STUDY 2

#### 4.1 Method

**Participants and procedure.** Six hundred six undergraduate students from a large Midwestern U.S. university participated in this study. Fifty-six percent of the sample were women (N=342) and forty-three percent were men (N=263). One person did not report his/her gender. The sample was 59.4% White/Caucasian, 21.5% Asian, 7.8% Black/African-American, 4.0% Latino/a, 4.6% Multiracial, 2.3% not specified/other. The mean age was 19.28 years (SD = 1.14 years), 90.2% of the participants were either currently or had previously been employed, and 42.2% indicated that they had previously been treated unfairly at work. Participants received course credit for their participation.

Participants first completed the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004) and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, et al., 1988). The order of these two measures was counterbalanced. Next, the participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions [unfair (N=206), fair (N=220), and control (N=180)], and presented a scenario to read which was representative of the assigned condition. After reading the scenario, participants completed the same dependent measures, manipulation checks, and demographic questionnaires described in Study 1 (also counterbalanced). In order to motivate the participants to complete the measures accurately, I informed them that they would receive personality feedback at the end of the study, and did in fact make it available to them.

**Experimental manipulation of third-party unfairness.** Following previous research (e.g., Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010), fictitious vignettes in which the participants were the main characters were used to induce third-party justice. A scenario read by the participants is

appropriate especially in this case as third-parties are sometimes made aware of an unfair situation by a friend or other indirect source (Skarlicki & Folger, 2005). Specifically, the scenarios asked the participants to imagine that they work in a restaurant as a server and are regularly scheduled with a group of coworkers. In the fair and unfair conditions, one *coworker* goes into detail about his/her fair or unfair treatment from the supervisor. For example, in the fair condition, the coworker is reported saying: “*When the manager makes decisions that affect me, my opinion and input are requested and I feel like I have a say in the decision process.*” However, in the unfair condition, the same sentence reads: “*When the manager makes decisions that affect me, my opinion and input are not requested and I feel that I do not have any say in the decision process.*” In the control condition, no information about treatment from the supervisor is given.

**Manipulation checks.** Four questions based on Colquitt (2001)’s organizational justice scale were created to determine whether the scenario effectively described treatment of the participants’ fictitious coworkers. Participants were asked “If you were in this situation, would you feel that,” “the rewards given to your coworker by your supervisor reflect what your coworker deserves,” “the procedures by which your supervisor treats your coworker are fair,” “your supervisor interacts with your coworker in a fair manner,” and “your supervisor explains things to your coworker in a fair way?” Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *not at all likely* (1) to *extremely likely* (5). Internal consistency reliability for the manipulation check was  $\alpha = .96$ . A one-way ANOVA [ $F(2, 602) = 417.372, p = .000$ ] showed that participants in the unfair condition ( $M_{unfair} = 1.98$ ) had lower average responses to the manipulation check questions than those in the fair ( $M_{fair} = 3.95$ ) and control ( $M_{control} = 3.93$ ) conditions.

**Measures.** The same measures of *honesty-humility*, *agreeableness*, and *conscientiousness* described in Study 1 were used in Study 2. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Internal consistency reliability for the honesty-humility, conscientiousness, and agreeableness measures were  $\alpha = .84$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ , and  $\alpha = .85$ , respectively. *Negative affectivity* was also assessed using the same measure from Study 1. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *never* (1) to *always* (5). Internal consistency reliability for this measure was  $\alpha = .75$ . In addition, I also obtained demographic information from the participants including gender, age, ethnicity, country of citizenship, level of education, whether they currently worked or had a job in the past, and whether they had been treated unfairly at work before.

**Dependent measures.** All of the dependent measures from Study 1 were used in Study 2. They were prefaced with a statement that read “If you were in this situation, how likely would you be to” with the items listed after. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale with endpoints ranging from *not at all likely* (1) to *extremely likely* (5).

Internal consistency reliability for the likelihood to engage in counterproductive work behaviors measure was  $\alpha = .88$  (13 items), while internal consistency reliability for the likelihood to engage in organizational retaliatory behaviors measure was  $\alpha = .92$  (17 items). Concerning likelihood to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors and performance, internal consistency reliability for the performance measure was  $\alpha = .79$  (7 items) and  $\alpha = .71$  for the OCB measure (6 items).

## 4.2 Results

Scale means, standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and inter-correlations among Study 2 variables are given in Table 1. Table 2 depicts cell means for high and low honesty-humility individuals assigned to each condition, for each dependent variable. For the hierarchical regression analyses, honesty-humility was entered as a continuous variable. In order to plot the interactions and create Table 2, high and low honesty-humility groups were formed by placing those one standard deviation or more above the mean into the high group and those one standard deviation or below into the low group. The values on the interaction graphs were calculated using the regression equations.

In order to test Hypothesis 3, I used hierarchical regression analyses. All continuous control, predictor, and moderator variables were mean-centered before being entered (Cohen, et al., 2003). For all analyses, the control variables (gender, negative affectivity, conscientiousness, and agreeableness) were entered at the first step, followed by honesty-humility and third-party unfairness at step two. The interaction between honesty-humility and third-party unfairness was entered at step three.

Hypothesis 3a predicted weaker positive effects of third-party unfairness on counterproductive work behavior and organizational retaliatory behaviors when honesty-humility is high. The interaction between honesty-humility and third-party unfairness was significant for CWB as a dependent variable ( $\beta = .15, p < .05$ ; see Table 6), but not for ORB. The pattern of this interaction is shown in Figure 6, where those high in honesty-humility engage in less CWB than those low in honesty-humility when witnessing unfair treatment of a coworker. However, the results of the simple slopes tests of the regression lines showed that neither of the slopes of the regression lines for those high or low in honesty-humility were significantly different from zero.

The change in  $R^2$  between steps 2 and 3 was significantly different for CWB ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .05$ ), and the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size is .01. These results confirm the moderating effect of honesty-humility on the relationship between third-party unfairness and aggressive behaviors. Therefore Hypothesis 3a was partially confirmed.

Hypotheses 3b and 3c predicted weaker negative effects of third-party unfairness on performance and organizational citizenship behavior when honesty-humility is high. The interaction between honesty-humility and third-party unfairness was significant for performance as a dependent variable ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ; see Table 7), but not for OCB (a reverse of the Study 1 results). The pattern of this interaction is shown in Figure 7, where those high in honesty-humility engage in higher performance behaviors than those low in honesty-humility when witnessing third-party unfairness. However, the results of the simple slopes tests of the regression lines showed that neither of the slopes of the regression lines for those high or low in honesty-humility were significantly different from zero. The change in  $R^2$  between steps 2 and 3 was significantly different for performance ( $\Delta R^2 = .01, p < .05$ ), and the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size is .01. These results confirm the moderating effect of honesty-humility on the relationship between third-party unfairness and prosocial behaviors. Therefore, Hypothesis 3b was supported, but not 3c.

#### **4.3 Discussion**

Overall, these results show that honesty-humility not only moderates the relationship between first-party unfairness and both aggressive and prosocial behaviors, but does the same for third-party injustice, although to a lesser extent. Those high in honesty-humility engaged in less CWB and had higher levels of performance than those low in honesty-humility. However, with both dependent variables, there was no change in the amount of CWB or level of performance



for those high or low in honesty-humility whether they witnessed fair or unfair treatment. This suggests that individuals high in honesty-humility have lower baseline levels of CWB and higher levels of performance, but do not change their behavior based on the un/fairness of the treatment they have witnessed. On the other hand, individuals low in honesty-humility also do not change their behaviors if they have witnessed fair or unfair treatment. I will now discuss the results of Studies 1 and 2 together.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Overview**

This research used two scenario-based experimental studies in order to examine whether honesty-humility moderated the relationship between both first- and third-party unfairness and both aggressive and prosocial behaviors, and exactly how that moderating role affected responses to unfair treatment. The importance of honesty-humility beyond other demographic and personality variables that have been found to influence our dependent variables of interest has been demonstrated. Among participants who were exposed to first-party unfairness, I found that honesty-humility played a strong role in negatively predicting revenge, and to a slightly lesser extent, positively predicting reconciliation. However, honesty-humility did not predict forgiveness. Therefore, in instances of unfairness, those who are high in honesty-humility will avoid obtaining revenge against an offender, and will even make an attempt to reconcile with a wrongdoer. In addition, agreeableness was a stronger predictor of reconciliation than honesty-humility for those in the unfair condition. Honesty-humility's effect on reconciliation may be explained by the idea that those high in this trait believe that it is important to be the "bigger person" and attempt to reconcile with the person who wronged them. However, they will not take the internal step of forgiving a person for treating them unfairly. The fact that those high in honesty-humility avoided enacting revenge behaviors may be evidence that they engage in a moral self-regulatory process (Rupp & Bell, 2010). It also shows that while they are able to restrict their emotions outwardly, it is not any easier for them to get over the hurt and pain involved when treated unfairly, meaning that levels of honesty-humility do not necessarily lead

to true forgiveness. Only agreeableness was a strong predictor of forgiveness among those in the unfair condition.

Study 1 also showed that honesty-humility moderates the effect of first-party unfairness on both prosocial and potentially destructive dependent variables. The figures demonstrating the nature of the interactions showed that those who were high in honesty-humility had lower counterproductive work behavior and organizational retaliatory behavior and higher organizational citizenship behavior and performance both when treated fairly and unfairly, compared to those low in honesty-humility. However in comparing the results of the two honesty-humility categories across the two unfairness conditions when predicting CWB and ORB, only those low in honesty-humility changed their behavior (those high in honesty-humility did not). This means that those low in honesty-humility engaged in more CWB and ORB when treated unfairly than when treated fairly. On the other hand, when examining the results of the two honesty-humility categories across the two unfairness conditions when predicting OCB, it is demonstrated that those with both levels of honesty-humility changed their behavior (with less OCB in the unfair condition and more in the fair condition). These results suggest that not only did those high in honesty-humility restrain themselves from retaliation when treated unfairly, but they also rewarded fair treatment with more OCB. This is consistent with the idea of moral self-regulation, where it is unfair to retaliate even when treated unfairly, but it is fair to engage in prosocial behaviors when treated fairly. Those who were low in honesty-humility engaged in more aggressive behaviors and less prosocial behavior regardless whether they were being treated unfairly or not; their behavior was indistinguishable across unfairness conditions.

With regard to third-party unfairness, Study 2 presents some interesting results as well. While the moderating effects of honesty-humility in this study were not as strong as those in

Study 1, the pattern of behavior is still worth noting. Honesty-humility significantly moderated the relationship between third-party unfairness and both CWB and performance, where those high in honesty-humility had lower CWB intentions across conditions and higher performance intentions across conditions than those low in honesty-humility. However, within both levels of honesty-humility, there was no significant change in the amount of CWB or performance when unfair or fair treatment towards a coworker was observed.

When comparing Study 2 findings to those in Study 1, some interesting inconsistencies arise. When those high in honesty-humility are treated unfairly themselves, they are less likely to retaliate, but are more likely to reward fairness when treated fairly. Curiously, high honesty-humility individuals continue to withhold retaliation despite a coworker's unfair treatment but do not reward the supervisor/organization with higher performance when the coworker is treated fairly. It would make more sense if high honesty-humility individuals continued to reward fairness in the workplace, despite who is experiencing it. It is also surprising that those low in honesty-humility change their levels of aggressive and prosocial behaviors based on whether they themselves are being treated unfairly or not, but do not change their behavior if a coworker is treated unfairly. This indicates that they would not feel the need to react based on a coworker's poor treatment, but only on their own. This, coupled with the lack of reward from those high in honesty-humility towards those who enact fair treatment, brings up the issue of self-interest with regard to the decision to act when either experiencing or witnessing injustice.

While I would expect those low in honesty-humility to act more in their own self-interest in comparison to those high in honesty-humility, recent discussions of self-interest indicate that no single motive such as self-interest can explain all human behavior (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2005). Across areas of psychology, it has been demonstrated that individuals empathize

with others' suffering and want to uphold moral norms (Cropanzano et al., 2005). Therefore, while those low in honesty-humility are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors than those high in honesty-humility in instances of justice and injustice, based on the deontic perspective they are still expected to react negatively (e.g., engaging in aggressive behaviors) to unfairness shown to others (i.e., show change in behavior across conditions). At the same time, while those high in honesty-humility are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors than those low in honesty-humility notwithstanding unfair treatment, they too are still expected to react positively to fairness towards others—as they did when they themselves were treated fairly. These inconsistencies warrant further study directly comparing reactions of those both high and low in honesty-humility to first- and third-party unfairness.

## **5.2 Limitations and Future Research**

One limitation of our paper is that the study was conducted using hypothetical scenarios (cf., Murphy, Herr, Lockhart, & Maguire, 1986); the participants read scenarios and had to imagine that they were in the situation. Therefore, subjects did not observe actual behaviors or react to real situations. However, as personality measures attempt to tap what people do across situations, these scenarios also tapped what people said they would do in the situations I provided. Therefore, the manipulation of justice and the measurement of the dependent variables is consistent with the measurement of the personality variables. While the external validity of the justice scenarios may have been lower than what a field study could have provided<sup>3</sup>, the internal validity of our manipulations was high, as evidenced by the strong effects of unfairness on all of the dependent variables, as well as our manipulation checks.

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<sup>3</sup> However, my scenarios did contain a certain amount of fidelity. In fact, I interviewed student servers in order to obtain accurate depictions of unfairness in a restaurant context. The scenarios were also piloted and refined before they were used in the study.

Another limitation of this, however, is that all the dependent measures came from the same source. The ills of common method bias have been well documented in the literature (c.f., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Research by Siemsen, Roth, and Oliviera (2010) demonstrates how common method bias can attenuate the interaction term in a regression equation. However, it is also suggested that if interaction effects are found when common method variance is an issue, it should be taken as robust evidence of the presence of the interaction between variables (Siemsen, et al., 2010). With this knowledge, I can fully anticipate replicating the results in hetero-method circumstances, where behavioral measures of counterproductive, retaliatory, and citizenship behavior can be obtained, and other employees besides the participant (e.g., coworkers and supervisors) can provide measurement of the dependent variables of interest.

A last limitation is that there was not much variation in honesty-humility or in the dependent variables. A majority of the participants had average levels of honesty-humility as opposed to extremely high or extremely low levels. This coupled with lost variance due to separating honesty-humility into high and low groups when conducting the simple slopes analyses may have attenuated the strength of my findings. Restricting the range on this low base rate trait may have caused Type II error, particularly in the results of Study 2. However, this should not detract from our current findings, as I can take this into account when designing future studies (Rousseau & Fried, 2001). This study should be replicated using samples where wider ranges of the important variables would be obtained.

Despite these limitations, I have demonstrated that honesty-humility is a variable that allows us to better understand the person-situation interaction that takes place when people decide whether or not to engage in potentially destructive behaviors. This study can be built upon

by studying honesty-humility, counterproductive and retaliatory behaviors, and justice in an organizational context, specifically in response to a collective injustice. In addition, studies should be designed that confirm whether those with high levels of honesty-humility actually engage in the moral self-regulation process. The adverse effects of engaging in moral self-regulation after being treated unfairly should be explored also. It would further be interesting to examine if those who are high in honesty-humility would need an apology or punishment for the offender, or if that is only needed by those who are not high in honesty-humility.

As organizational justice research continues to utilize the deontic model in understanding work behavior, it will be important to confirm models of how justice perceptions are formed (Rupp, 2011; Rupp & Paddock, 2010). While this paper does not directly address justice perception formation, it extends our knowledge of how honesty-humility can influence behavioral thresholds, and provides an impetus for examining moral-self regulation among high and low honesty-humility individuals.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

It has been well established that injustice occurs in organizational contexts, even after managers have been made aware of this issue. Now that I have support for the idea that those who have higher levels of honesty-humility will still reduce their counterproductive and retaliatory behavior despite how they are being treated, it is important not to abuse that knowledge. Selecting individuals who have high levels of honesty-humility, while not addressing organizational instances of unfairness is unethical. Focusing on the benefits of using honesty-humility measures in selection contexts must go hand in hand with resolving injustice in the workplace.

## **5.4 Conclusions**

In conclusion, through this research, I have taken steps to understand the individual differences and contextual factors that contribute to human behavior in the workplace. As I now know that honesty-humility can influence both aggressive and prosocial responses to unfairness, I can continue to investigate person-by-situation interactions in the development of behavioral justice reactions.



## TABLES

Table 1

*Cell Means (and Standard Deviations) for all Study 1 and Study 2 Dependent Variables*

	Study 1 (1 <sup>st</sup> party unfairness)			Study 2 (3 <sup>rd</sup> party unfairness)		
CWB	Unfair	Fair	Control	Unfair	Fair	Control
Low H-H	2.41 (.86) <i>n</i> =26	1.53 (.58) <i>n</i> =40	1.50 (.40) <i>n</i> =34	1.77 (.49) <i>n</i> =37	1.38 (.50) <i>n</i> =30	1.60 (.41) <i>n</i> =25
High H-H	1.51 (.43) <i>n</i> =23	1.12 (.14) <i>n</i> =34	1.19 (.16) <i>n</i> =32	1.32 (.36) <i>n</i> =28	1.28 (.42) <i>n</i> =40	1.17 (.33) <i>n</i> =30
ORB	Unfair	Fair	Control	Unfair	Fair	Control
Low H-H	2.62 (.85) <i>n</i> =26	1.62 (.66) <i>n</i> =40	1.64 (.40) <i>n</i> =34	1.94 (.58) <i>n</i> =36	1.54 (.57) <i>n</i> =30	1.70 (.48) <i>n</i> =25
High H-H	1.66 (.58) <i>n</i> =23	1.13 (.16) <i>n</i> =34	1.23 (.22) <i>n</i> =32	1.46 (.42) <i>n</i> =28	1.26 (.33) <i>n</i> =40	1.23 (.44) <i>n</i> =30
Perform.	Unfair	Fair	Control	Unfair	Fair	Control
Low H-H	3.53 (.78) <i>n</i> =26	4.12 (.53) <i>n</i> =40	4.34 (.44) <i>n</i> =34	3.66 (.72) <i>n</i> =37	4.37 (.58) <i>n</i> =30	4.37 (.51) <i>n</i> =25
High H-H	4.03 (.59) <i>n</i> =23	4.54 (.33) <i>n</i> =34	4.43 (.38) <i>n</i> =32	4.31 (.52) <i>n</i> =28	4.57 (.44) <i>n</i> =40	4.50 (.36) <i>n</i> =30
OCB	Unfair	Fair	Control	Unfair	Fair	Control
Low H-H	2.99 (.87) <i>n</i> =26	3.99 (.63) <i>n</i> =40	4.22 (.47) <i>n</i> =34	3.44 (.62) <i>n</i> =37	4.06 (.57) <i>n</i> =30	3.97 (.61) <i>n</i> =25
High H-H	3.75 (.63) <i>n</i> =23	4.60 (.39) <i>n</i> =34	4.24 (.39) <i>n</i> =32	4.16 (.57) <i>n</i> =28	4.34 (.58) <i>n</i> =40	4.33 (.50) <i>n</i> =30
Revenge	Unfair					
Low H-H	1.84 (.86) <i>n</i> =26					
High H-H	1.24 (.32) <i>n</i> =23					
Reconcil.	Unfair					
Low H-H	2.41 (.95) <i>n</i> =26					
High H-H	2.71 (1.14) <i>n</i> =26					
Forgive.	Unfair					
Low H-H	1.97 (.71) <i>n</i> =26					
High H-H	2.70 (.96) <i>n</i> =23					

*Note.* Honesty-humility is abbreviated as H-H.

Table 2

*Scale Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficient Alphas, and Correlations for All Study 1 and Study 2 Variables*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	$\alpha$	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	
1. Gender	1.49	.50	--		.10*	.11*	.01	.16*	.02	-.23**	-.20**	.11*	.15**	--	.50	1.57	1. Gender
2. Neg. Affect	2.59	.46	.77	.08		-.16**	-.38**	-.11*	.00	-.00	.06	-.08	-.03	.75	.44	2.63	2. Neg. Affect
3. Conscientious.	3.37	.60	.84	.25**	-.03		.15**	.18**	.01	-.16**	-.16**	.17**	.19**	.86	.60	3.52	3. Conscientious.
4. Agreeableness	3.04	.56	.85	.03	-.25**	.02		.27**	-.07	-.12**	-.17**	.18	.09	.85	.59	2.99	4. Agreeableness
5. Honesty-Hum.	3.18	.57	.83	.23**	-.11	.23**	.20**		-.03	-.19**	-.23**	.24**	.24**	.84	.59	3.27	5. Honesty-Hum.
6. 1 <sup>st</sup> Party Unfair	.47	.50	--	.08	-.01	.08	-.08	-.03		.25**	.33**	-.33**	-.26**	--	.50	.48	6.3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Unfair
7. CWB	1.54	.65	.92	-.11	.14	-.30**	-.20**	-.42**	.38**		.79**	-.62**	-.49**	.88	.48	1.41	7. CWB
8. ORB	1.65	.70	.94	-.06	.18*	-.32**	-.21**	-.47**	.50**	.86**		-.67**	-.53**	.92	.53	1.52	8. ORB
9. OCB	3.90	.77	.78	.02	-.25**	.22**	.25**	.40**	-.50**	-.62**	-.69**		.73**	.71	.63	4.02	9. OCB
10. Performance	4.05	.68	.79	.03	-.21**	.20**	.20*	.26**	-.42**	-.55**	-.54**	.72**		.79	.63	4.22	10. Performance
11. Revenge	1.54	.76	.84	-.21**	.15*	-.23**	-.18*	-.29**	--	.56**	.55**	-.37**	-.43**	11	12	13	
12. Reconciliation	2.71	.95	.80	.07	-.04	-.04	.40**	.24**	--	-.20**	-.22**	.36**	.26**	-.13			
13. Forgiveness	2.32	.86	.87	.06	-.14	-.14	.48**	.23**	--	-.12	-.15	.24**	.17*	-.12	.62**		

*Note.* \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ . Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Both first- and third-party unfairness is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0.

Study 1 (N=375) correlations are below the diagonal and Study 2 (N=425) correlations are above the diagonal. Revenge, reconciliation, and forgiveness values only apply to Study 1 participants in the unfair condition (N=176).

Table 3

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility Predicting Revenge, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness in Unfair Condition*

Variable	Revenge		Reconciliation		Forgiveness	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Gender	-.27*	-.21	.02	-.03	.07	.03
Negative Affectivity	.21	.18	.14	.16	-.05	-.01
Conscientiousness	-.22*	-.18	.25*	.21	.05	.02
Agreeableness	-.20	-.15	.70***	.66***	.73***	.69***
Honesty-Humility		-.25*		.24*		.20
<i>N</i>	173		173		173	
<i>F</i>	5.89***	6.01***	10.14***	9.01***	12.94***	11.14***
<i>df</i>	4	5	4	5	4	5
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.12	.15	.20	.21	.24	.25
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.10	.13	.18	.19	.22	.23
$\Delta R^2$	.12***	.03*	.20	.02*	.24	.02

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 4

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility and Unfairness Predicting**Counterproductive Work Behavior*

Variable	Step 1	95% CI	Step 2	95% CI	Step 3	95% CI
Gender	-.03	-.16, .11	.01	-.11, .13	.01	-.11, .12
Negative Affectivity	.05	-.09, .20	.08	-.05, .21	.06	-.06, .19
Conscientiousness	-.24***	-.35, -.13	-.20***	-.30, -.10	-.21***	-.31, -.11
Agreeableness	-.18**	-.29, -.06	-.06	-.16, .05	-.07	-.18, .03
Honesty-Humility			-.30***	-.41, -.19	-.13	-.28, .01
Unfairness			.50***	.38, .61	.50***	.38, .61
Honesty-Humility x Unfair					-.35**	-.54, -.15
<i>N</i>	369		369		369	
<i>F</i>	8.47***		25.29***		23.98***	
<i>df</i>	4		6		7	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.09		.30		.32	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.08		.28		.30	
$\Delta R^2$	.09***		.21***		.02**	
<i>f</i> <sup>2</sup>					.03	

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Unfair condition is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 5

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility and Unfairness Predicting Organizational Retaliatory Behavior*

Variable	Step 1	95% CI	Step 2	95% CI	Step 3	95% CI
Gender	-.01	-.15, .14	.03	-.09, .15	.03	-.09, .14
Negative Affectivity	.08	-.08, .24	.11	-.01, .24	.10	-.03, .22
Conscientiousness	-.22***	-.34, -.10	-.18***	-.28, -.08	-.19***	-.29, -.09
Agreeableness	-.22**	-.34, -.09	-.07	-.17, .04	-.08	-.19, .02
Honesty-Humility			-.36***	-.46, -.25	-.18*	-.32, -.03
Unfairness			.69***	.57, .80	.68***	.57, .79
Honesty-Humility x Unfair					-.37***	-.57, -.18
<i>N</i>	369		369		369	
<i>F</i>	8.25***		41.35***		38.78***	
<i>df</i>	4		6		7	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.08		.41		.43	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.07		.40		.42	
$\Delta R^2$	.08***		.32***		.02***	
<i>f</i> <sup>2</sup>					.04	

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Unfair condition is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 6

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility and Unfairness Predicting Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

Variable	Step 1	95% CI	Step 2	95% CI	Step 3	95% CI
Gender	-.06	-.21, .10	-.08	-.21, .04	-.08	-.21, .04
Negative Affectivity	-.16	-.33, .01	-.20**	-.33, -.06	-.19**	-.33, -.05
Conscientiousness	.23**	.10, .36	.20***	.09, .31	.20***	.10, .31
Agreeableness	.28***	.14, .42	.12*	.01, .24	.14*	.02, .25
Honesty-Humility			.35***	.23, .47	.24**	.09, .40
Unfairness			-.76***	-.88, -.64	-.76***	-.88, -.64
Honesty-Humility x Unfair					.22*	.00, .43
<i>N</i>	369		369		369	
<i>F</i>	10.83***		43.19***		37.87***	
<i>df</i>	4		6		7	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.11		.42		.42	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.10		.41		.41	
$\Delta R^2$	.11***		.31***		.01*	
<i>f</i> <sup>2</sup>					.01	

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Unfair condition is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 7

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility and Third-Party Unfairness Predicting Counterproductive Work Behavior*

Variable	Step 1	95% CI	Step 2	95% CI	Step 3	95% CI
Gender	-.20***	-.29, -.11	-.19***	-.28, -.10	-.18***	-.26, -.09
Negative Affectivity	-.05	-.16, .06	-.04	-.15, .06	-.04	-.15, .07
Conscientiousness	-.10**	-.18, -.03	-.09*	-.16, -.02	-.09*	-.16, -.01
Agreeableness	-.10*	-.17, -.02	-.05	-.13, .03	-.05	-.13, .03
Honesty-Humility			-.10*	-.17, -.02	-.03	-.13, .07
Third-Party Unfairness			.24***	.15, .32	.23***	.15, .32
Honesty-Humility x Unfair					.15*	-.29, -.01
<i>N</i>	426		426		426	
<i>F</i>	9.73***		13.28***		12.09***	
<i>df</i>	4		6		7	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.09		.16		.17	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.08		.15		.15	
$\Delta R^2$	.09***		.08***		.01*	
<i>f</i> <sup>2</sup>					.01	

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Unfair condition is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 8

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Honesty-Humility and Third-Party Unfairness Predicting Performance*

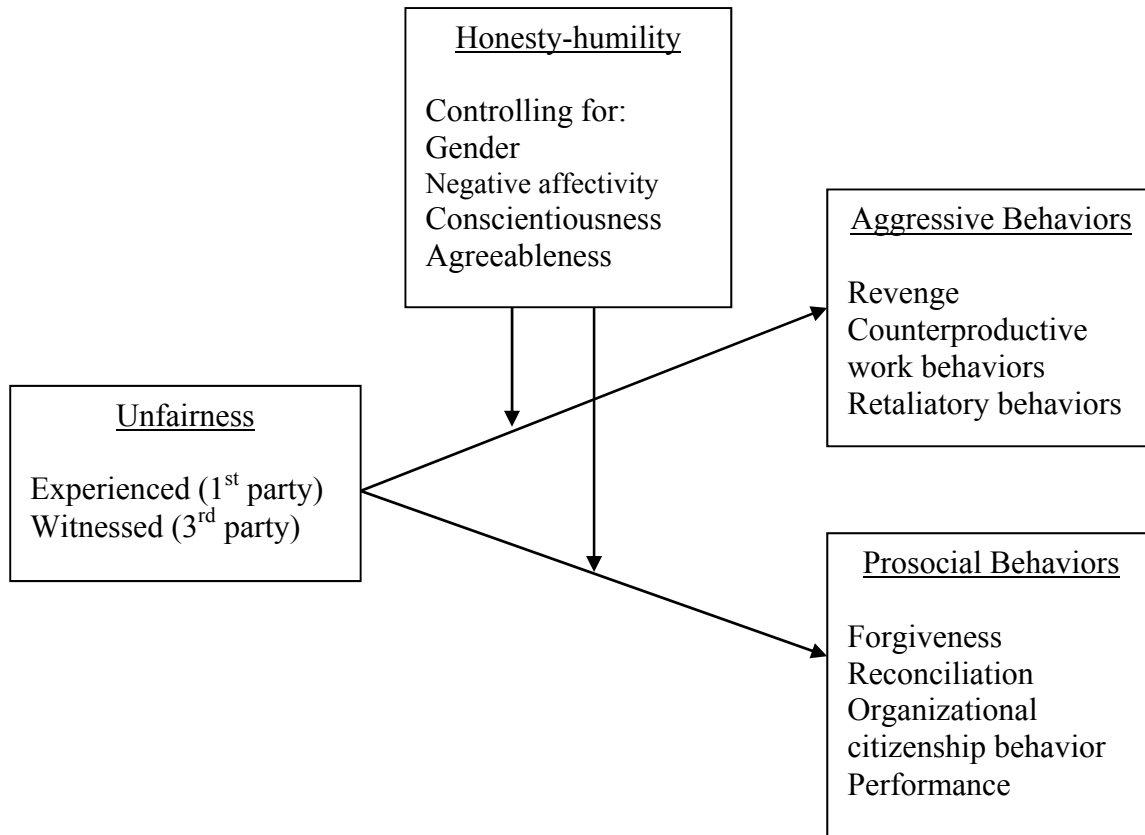
Variable	Step 1	95% CI	Step 2	95% CI	Step 3	95% CI
Gender	.17**	.05, .29	.13*	.02, .25	.12*	.00, .23
Negative Affectivity	.02	-.13, .16	.01	-.13, .15	.00	-.13, .14
Conscientiousness	.18***	.08, .28	.16**	.06, .25	.15**	.05, .24
Agreeableness	.08	-.03, .19	.01	-.10, .11	.01	-.10, .11
Honesty-Humility			.20***	.10, .30	.11	-.02, .24
Third-Party Unfairness			-.32***	-.43, -.21	-.32***	-.43, -.21
Honesty-Humility x Unfair					.21***	.03, .40
<i>N</i>	426		426		426	
<i>F</i>	6.77***		13.14***		12.08***	
<i>df</i>	4		6		7	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.06		.16		.17	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.05		.15		.15	
$\Delta R^2$	.06***		.10***		.01*	
<i>f</i> <sup>2</sup>					.01	

*Note.* Gender is coded male = 0 and female = 1. Unfair condition is coded unfair = 1, fair = 0.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

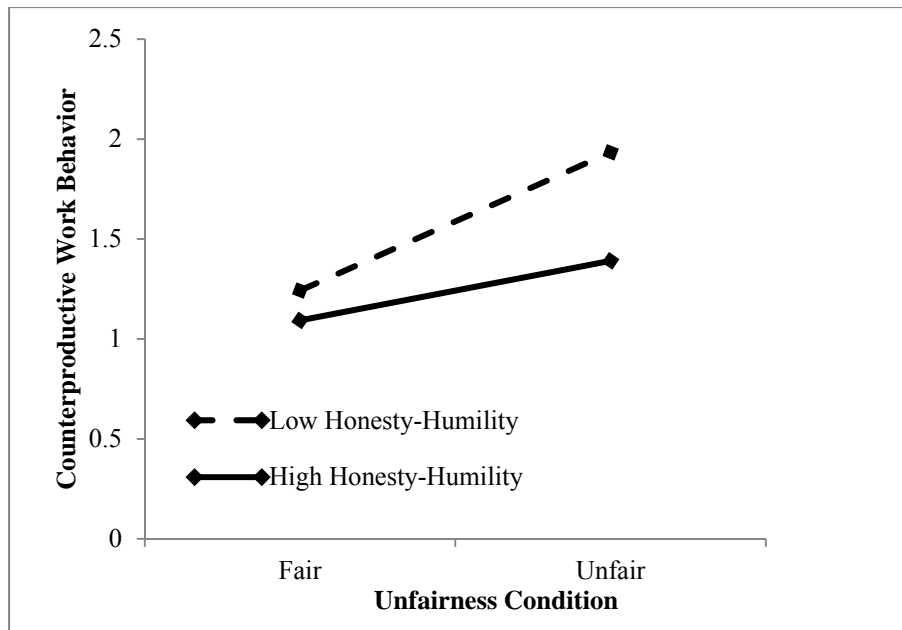


## FIGURES



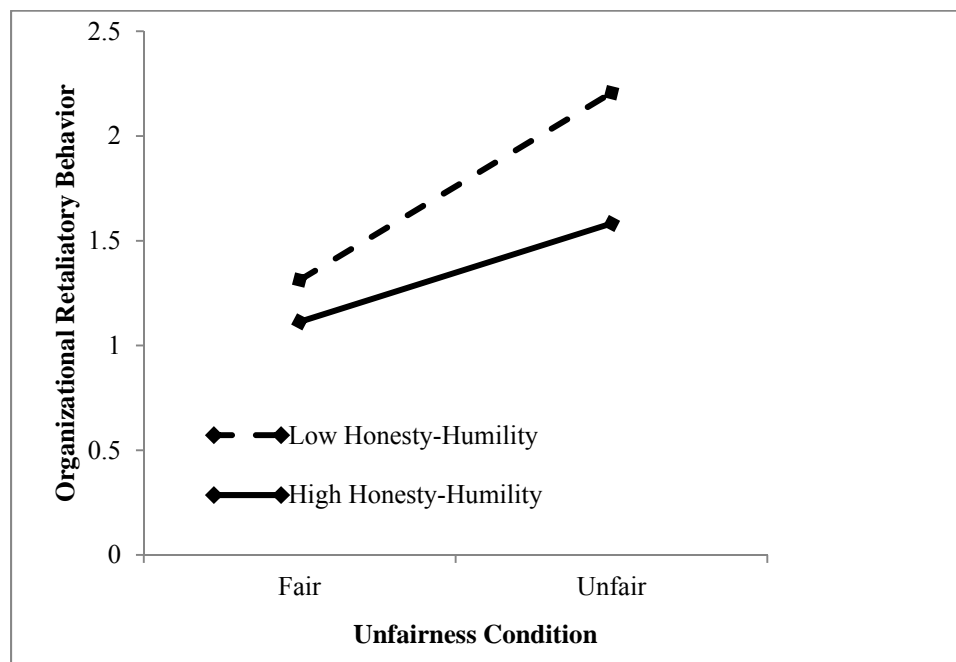
*Figure 1*

The theoretical model tested in this study.



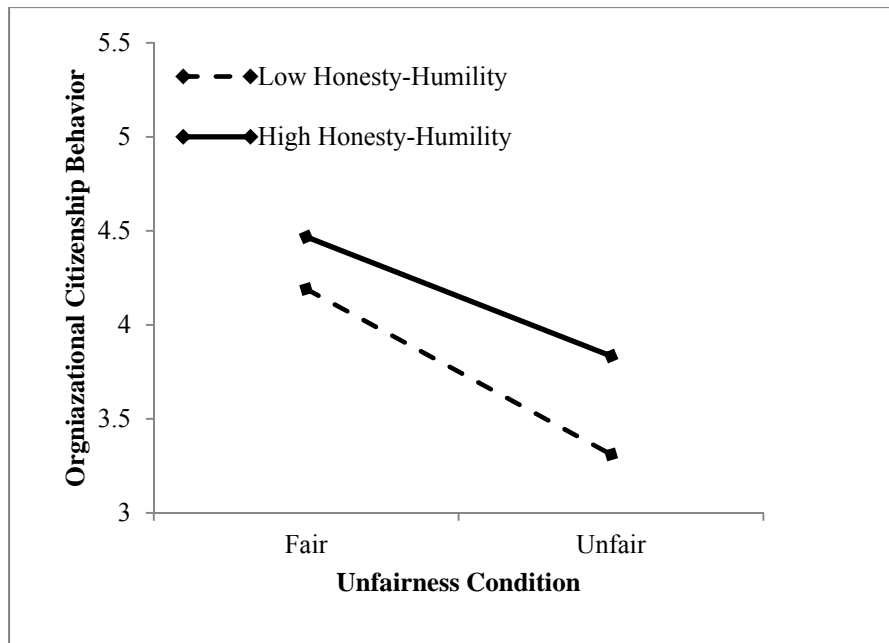
*Figure 2*

The interaction between unfairness and honesty-humility predicting counterproductive work behavior.



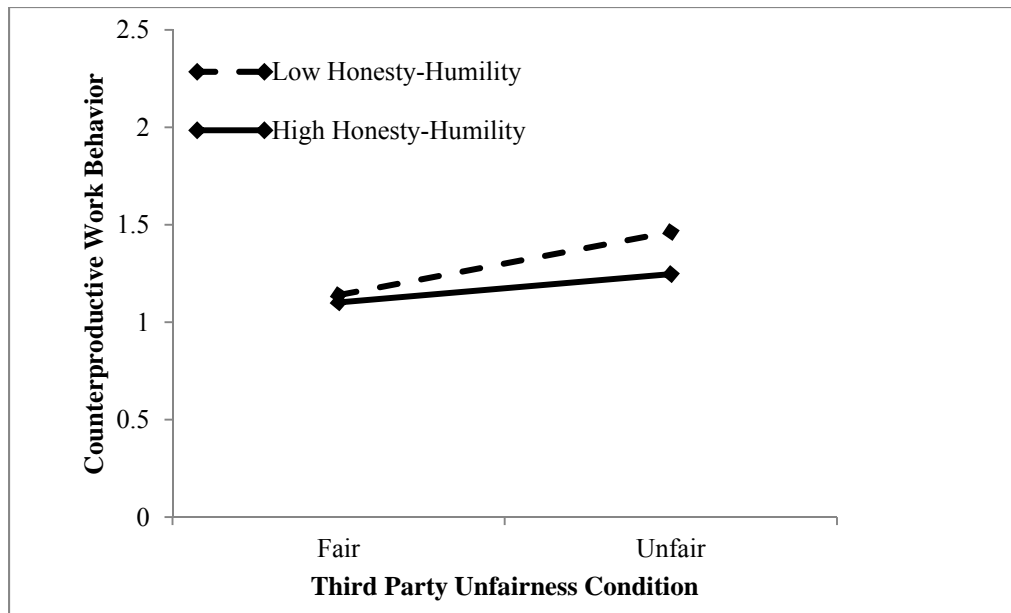
*Figure 3*

The interaction between unfairness and honesty-humility predicting organizational retaliatory behavior.



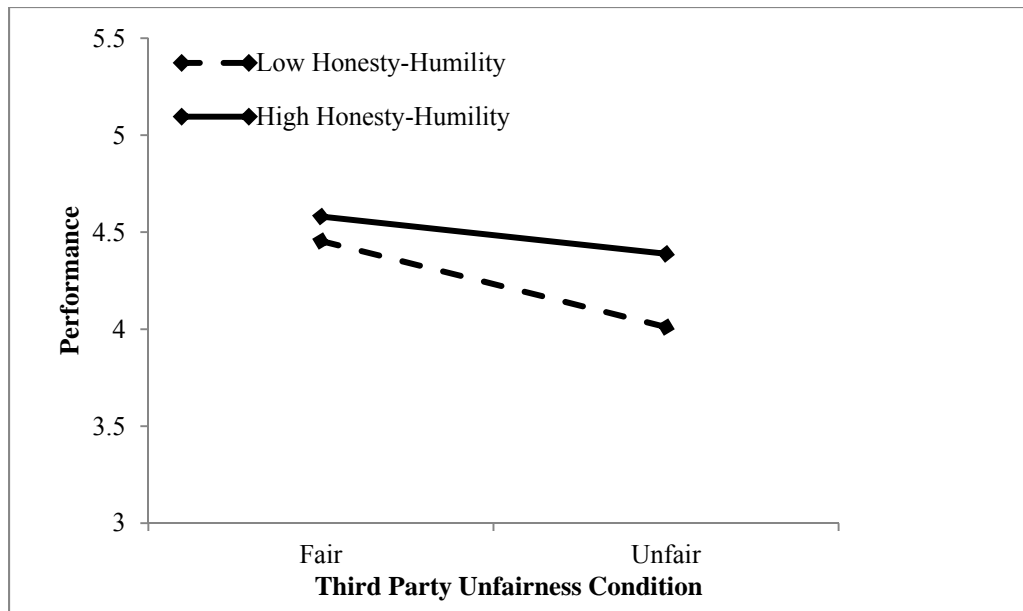
*Figure 4*

The interaction between unfairness and honesty-humility predicting organizational citizenship behavior.



*Figure 5*

The interaction between third-party unfairness and honesty-humility predicting counterproductive work behavior.



*Figure 6*

The interaction between third-party unfairness and honesty-humility predicting performance.

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